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AF/PD ANYASO, EHRNMAN, LISENBY; AF/W NARKIS; IIP DOMOWITZ, BERGIN

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SUBJECT: POTUS ADDRESS TO THE MUSLIM WORLD INSPIRES MALIAN MUSLIM LEADERSHIP

¶1. Summary. The June 4 POTUS address to the Muslim world was extremely well received by Malian Muslim leaders. While a variety of anecdotal evidence indicated that the speech resulted in public blessings for the President and the United States in Friday prayers around Bamako, two letters from important Malian leaders provide concrete evidence of the positive influence the speech had in expanding the already excellent relations between the American people and the Malian faithful. End Summary.

High Council of Islam Addresses Letter to President Obama

¶2. The Malian High Council of Islam (HCIM) is the most important Muslim association in the country. The HCIM, created in January 2002, is an umbrella organization regrouping most of the other Islamic associations and NGOs (including Muslim women organizations) in Mali. The principal interlocutor of the GOM on all Islamic issues, the HCIM is represented in all of Mali's eight regions and is also the Embassy's main conduit for generalized outreach to Malian Muslims.

¶3. At a June reception at the Ambassador's residence, the current HCIM President, Mr. Mahmoud Dicko, pulled the Ambassador aside to congratulate us on the speech and to inform her that a letter would be sent addressed to President Obama in this regard. On June 18, the following letter was received:

Begin Translation.

Mr. President,

Along with the rest of the world, the Muslim community in Mali closely followed your speech in Cairo on June 4 addressed to men and women around the world in general and to Muslims in particular. We continue to be impressed by the grand rhetoric of the speech, the sincerity of its provenance, and the great hope that it inspired.

Mr. President,

We would like to take this opportunity to affirm that you have made your own the cardinal values of Islam, capable of building a world of peace. Your profound aspirations, expressed with firm conviction, echo those of other great men who have been made immortal by their service to humanity, and their capacity to build a better world. We also have proof that you understand that America can continue to be great while at the same working towards a world rich in diversity. This world vision, we assure you, is one that we share.

Mr. President,

In the name of the Malian Muslim community, we say to you, "Congratulations" for your pragmatism and your pursuit of our common interests, including that of the United States. We pray soon the world will be able to say, "Obama said it, and he did it."

Formal closing,
Mahmoud Dicko
President
Chevalier de l'Ordre National

End Translation.

Conservative Imam Sends Condolences to the American People

¶4. One of Mali's most socially conservative Muslim leaders, Mohamed Kimbiri, is also the director of the largest Muslim radio station in Bamako. Kimbiri, an excellent contact and frequent participant in Embassy events, received a grant for VOA equipment in 2008 that allows him to broadcast Radio Sawa to his one million listeners in the Bamako area.

¶5. On June 23, Kimbiri sent the following letter to express his condolences on the metro crash in Washington, DC. While it does not specifically mention the speech, we know that he was inspired to write this letter as a result of the positive feelings generated by the June 4 address and as the eyes of the Malian Muslim community are focused on the President and Washington, DC.

Begin Translation.

Madame Ambassador,

It is with considerable sadness that I write to you regarding the news of the sad death of nine people and the multiple injuries caused by the metro accident in Washington, DC. The loss of so many people at one time is a cruel event.

The train accident has left the United States - an unconditional ally to my country, in mourning. We have heard from many observers, including the Mayor of Washington, that this was the worst accident in the history of the metro in Washington.

Aware of the solidarity that unites the United States and its citizens, and understanding the enormous pain caused by the death of so many, I join President Obama and his wife, Michele Obama, in presenting my deepest condolences to the family of the victims and in hoping for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Formal closing,
Mohamed Kimbiri
Member of the High Council of Islam
Director of Radio Dambe, "Voice of the Muslims"

End translation.

Milovanovic